

Ambassador Blanchard's Remarks for 2nd OHDACA Donation

June 15, 2020

Thanks to you all for joining us here today, and to the Minister Gantar once again for including me in the recent tribute to the dedicated medical workers, emergency responders, and those providing essential services across Slovenia. As I was chatting with some of those being honored standing outside the hospital in Golnik, I mentioned that I too began my career in the medical field. Those light green scrubs and white shoes bring back good memories for me – of how exhausting, but also deeply rewarding it is to serve those in need. Seeing them was also a reminder of just how much we owe those who risked their lives during the COVID crisis to keep us healthy and safe.

So while we should continue to thank them for the work they've done – in the U.S. and here in Slovenia - we also need to start preparing now for how to better protect them and give them the tools they need should the coronavirus resurge in the months to come. Which is why we're here today.

Because the U.S. military has the utmost respect for their Slovenian partners and our longstanding defense relationship, the U.S. European Command did not hesitate when we asked what support they might be able to provide to Slovenia's efforts to control the outbreak. The protective suits and ultraviolet disinfection device being presented today were two projects funded in their Overseas Humanitarian Disaster Assistance and Civic Aid Program. My team at the Embassy worked with the Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Health to identify equipment needs, then sought out local vendors and manufacturers capable of fulfilling those needs, while ensuring the funding went back into the Slovenian economy. It is critical that we work together not only to prevent the spread of this virus and its dire consequences, but also to revitalize our economies in the wake of the pandemic. In that spirit, I would like to give a special thanks to UV-C Solutions for working with us to make this invaluable piece of disinfection equipment affordable within the constraints of our budget for this donation. I am awed by this innovative technology, as well as their generosity and determination to support their country.

So let me say thank you one more time, but also reiterate that whatever future challenges we may face, the United States stands with Slovenia – as Allies, partners, and friends.